

A comparison between heidegger and camus

Profession, Philosophers



Heidegger vs. Camus

Heidegger and Camus are both famous philosophers. Both philosophers are involved in ideas of existentialism. Existentialism is defined as: “ a philosophical theory or approach that emphasizes the existence of the individual person as a free and responsible agent determining their own development through acts of the will.” Although they both have the same subject their ideas on existentialism are completely different.

Camus stated in one of his books that: “ No, I am not an existentialist. Sartre and I are always surprised to see our names linked. We have even thought of publishing a short statement in which the undersigned declare that they have nothing in common with each other and refuse to be held responsible for the debts they might respectively incur. It’s a joke actually. Sartre and I published our books without exception before we had ever met. When we did get to know each other, it was to realize how much we differed. Sartre is an existentialist, and the only book of ideas that I have published, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, was directed against the so-called existentialist philosophers.”

Albert Camus (1913-1960) was an editor, journalist, editorialist, playwright, director, novelist, and the author of several short stories. Also most recognized as a philosopher, even though he would deny it. Camus ignored and was hostile against systematic philosophy. He had little belief in rationalism. Rationalism is belief or theory that opinions and actions should be based on reason and knowledge rather than on religious belief or emotional response. Mainly he asserted his beliefs rather than argue them. He was a very preoccupied man within his own thoughts and life

experiences. He daydreamed over ideas of the meaning of life and also the face of death. Although, Camus did forcefully isolated himself from existentialism he did comment on the twentieth century's best-known existentialist question, which launched *The Myth of Sisyphus*. According to the Greek myth, Sisyphus is condemned to roll a rock up to the top of a mountain, only to have the rock roll back down to the bottom every time he reaches the top. The gods were wise, Camus suggests, in perceiving that an eternity of futile labor is a hideous punishment. Camus claims the only real question in philosophy is suicide. Through his philosophy of the absurd, he has left us with a shocking image of human fate. This fate is revealed to us in the story of Sisyphus.

Camus is not an academic philosopher but an existential thinker who troubled with making sense of meaninglessness in life. The concept that is central to his early phase is the idea of absurdity. Absurdity is the feeling which derives from confrontation of the world. This confrontation is irrational, but has the ability to catch human desire to live in full consciousness of it. From luminous appreciation on absurdity in our lives, three consequences arise says Camus. They are revolt, freedom and passion.

By 'revolt' Camus mean opposition in the face of dreary truth about our human condition, without hope but not satisfied, lending to life a specific grandeur. Once we recognize the absurdity in us, we are freed from the habit of convention. The easiest way this can be done is through maximizing the quantity of your experiences rather the quality of them.

Camus was also involved in the idea of totalitarianism. He strongly opposed this subject. Totalitarianism is a political system in which the state holds total authority over the society and seeks to control all aspects of public and private life wherever possible. Camus and Sartre became distant because of his solid belief that totalitarianism was absurd and should not be practiced anywhere in the World. He also was a lifelong opponent to capital punishment. Camus basically believed that every person should be free and able to live a prosperous life through quantity of great experiences.

Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) is widely acknowledged to be one of the most unique and controversial philosophers of the 20th century. He was also considered to be one of the most important. His main concern within philosophy was the idea of ontology, which is the study of being. In Heidegger's crucial treaty, *Being and Time*, he tackled accessing being (sein) by phenomenological investigation of human reality. The word (Sasein) in appreciation to its physical and historical character. After he changed his way of thinking, he placed attention on language, which the question can be unraveled. Heidegger's searched for clarification of the word being not through metaphysics.

His ideas have exerted an influential influence on advancements of contemporary European philosophy. Not only has he impacted philosophy but other subjects as well. He treated the architectural theory as well. This theory is the thinking, discussing, and writing about architecture.

Heidegger was very concerned with existentialism. He believed there was but only one question though and that was the question of being. " To the

things themselves" is letting be seen of which shows itself. Heidegger was under the influence of Husserl but also drew on the thoughts of Kierkegaard and Dilthey as well. Learning from these teachers. Heidegger started to develop his own ideas of existentialism.

Being (sein) isn't something arranged up in a realm that phenomenologists have mysterious access to. It is however what is understood in the always understanding of being which already belongs to the being of (Dasein). Dasein is Heidegger's own word which means being aware of ourselves. So basically, he claims that, being is ultimately being aware of ourselves. It can have several meanings, and that it is up to you to identify it in your own words.

Phenomenology, lets being be exposed, it lays bare of the conditions of possibilities. Phenomenology of Dasein is the absolutely mandatory for doing any philosophy. In his views, recognition of ontological difference (being is not being). The being of Dasein (existence), is such that Dasein understands its own being, but in this understanding always knows at the same time understand the being of entities other than its own.

Both of these Philosophers gave a lot of insight to the word existentialism. Although, Camus claimed that was not his incentive. Both ideas on the topic are quite different. They seemed to have more differences than similarities in fact. This could be partly due to where they are from and how they were brought up. Camus was born and raised in Greece, whereas Heidegger was from Germany.

To Camus existentialism was formed around being in a sense just as Heidegger. Camus believed that the only real question in philosophy is suicide, whereas Heidegger believes in life and death, the question of being in such. When one feels the absolute need to take their own life, where does being go? Do you go from being to not being in this occurrence?

Also, Camus, is concerned with the purpose of life? In his story of Sisyphus, he makes a wonderful point about existentialism. What is the worth and desire of life when you do pointless actions (such as carrying the rock)? Heidegger says this is answered with your Dasein or awareness of self.

Heidegger has a more proactive train of thought than Camus. He believes that life is what you make it. However, Camus stated it is not the quality of your experiences, it is the quantity, which sort of contradicts what he is indicating in his story. If he truly believes life is about the quantity of good/bad experiences rather than the quality, Sisyphus would have been content. Before he was sentenced to this punishment of carrying the boulder, he most likely enjoyed some of life but is not condemned to this punishment and has no freedom. The quality is horrible but quantity of days is minimal in comparison of his total life.

Camus also uses the word absurdity in relations to existentialism. He claimed that things in life can seem absurd and pointless. Heidegger seeks to put meaning into life a lot more than Camus. Heidegger says that being aware of your own life can put importance into it. Basically, you control what you want your life to be.

In comparison I would absolutely state that Heidegger's idea of existentialism is a lot deeper and more therapeutic than Camus. Unlike Camus, Heidegger makes you deeply think about being. He doesn't only look at death and suicide but being in real life. He explores more into the realms of being than Camus. This could be partly due to the fact that Heidegger refers to himself as a philosopher in existentialism whereas Camus completely isolated himself from this title.

Heidegger did not have the same views on totalitarianism as Camus. Heidegger started to become attracted to the Socialist movement and also Adolf Hitler, the charismatic leader of it. He, like many other German intellectuals, saw this time period as a needed renewal and regeneration for the German people. He felt that it was necessary to control these people. He felt that the injustices that were being done were completely acceptable, unlike Camus. Although, I agree with Heidegger's beliefs on existentialism I agree with Camus on this totalitarianism. Heidegger eventually found morality in this topic after the fact. He later felt bad for his position in the Socialist movement.

Although there are several differences amongst Camus and Heidelberg in their beliefs on philosophy, existentialism, and totalitarianism, they did share some things in common. In fact, all the philosophers of existentialism believed that philosophical thinking begins with the human subject firstly- not merely the thinking subject, but the acting, feeling, living human individual.

I personally enjoy Heidegger's ideas on existentialism. I think that logically, being aware of yourself can solve several problems. Sometimes we are more focused on what others are doing, that we don't look upon ourselves. We are always quick to point the finger at someone else, when we in fact do the same thing. This idea can be used also in any relationship or situation.

If we are aware of ourselves in being, we are responsible for our own actions. We consciously know what is right and wrong. We choose to do these things, and therefore should be held responsible for such. By having this awareness, we can better assess our lives and direct them in the correct path for success.

I don't agree with Camus on his statement that "suicide is the only important question that philosophy has to answer." Philosophy is not only about dying and death. I believe more philosophical topics are actually about life. Philosophers can only truly be certain on topics of life and the meaning of it because they actually experience it. Theoretical thinking and hypothesis thinking can be linked to death and the afterlife, whereas experiences and feelings can help explain the purpose and privilege of life.

On totalitarianism I would have to say that I agree with Camus. I don't think it is ever acceptable for government to control and inspect every aspect of your life. I believe that this really isn't life. There is no freedom at all in these circumstances. Almost every aspect of your life is decided for you. Little things such as dress, meal proportions, and daily life functioning is depended on someone else. Generally, a very strict and authoritative individual, such

as Adolf Hitler. The life that many of the Jews experienced would not be classified as life but as a living hell.

I would say that my favorite aspect of existentialism by Heidegger would be the fact that you can create your own thoughts from it. This idea is much broader than that of Camus. Being is ultimately what you make it. Being can be so many different things to different people. It is not by any means individualized

Both philosophers represent wonderful ideas of existentialism and will be historically remembered forever. They left us with great works and words in their lifetimes. It is very essential to have several different beliefs on a subject, in order to gain a better understanding of such.

Here is a beautiful quote by Heidegger that truly reflects his thoughts on being he claimed " If I take death into my life, acknowledge it, and face it squarely, I will free myself from the anxiety of death and the pettiness of life - and only then will I be free to become myself." I think this quote really reflects his beliefs because he claims that by facing something (reaching awareness) you can truly become free. If you let things boil up inside, you will only face fear and anxiety until the time comes that you must face it. You should simply let things be and be aware of yourself at all times. Don't let thoughts control you, let yourself control your thoughts and actions.